

From: [Schubert, Alex](#)
To: [Elliott, Holly](#)
Subject: Re: Question on preparation of the matrix
Date: Monday, November 18, 2013 8:45:37 AM
Attachments: [assessment review matrix.xls](#)
[Draft, deliberative descriptions of ranking for state assessments \(2\).doc](#)

In the matrix that I started preparing for the 9-plan, I used the latest version of the matrix (attached) and I tried to include a very detailed description of each management action (i.e., the entire text of each management action from the alternatives table) for each COT issue that each management action addressed, respectively. I am basing the matrix that I started preparing on the matrix that I was given by BLM for the 9-plan. So far, I have included only the management actions from the preferred alternative. I am in the process of seeking guidance to find out if I need to prepare a separate matrix for each alternative. I think whatever you could provide me in terms of a matrix would be very helpful. I am attaching the latest version of the matrix, so that you can use that if you prefer. It is the version that I am using.

Thanks!
Alex

On Fri, Nov 15, 2013 at 1:21 PM, Elliott, Holly <helliott@blm.gov> wrote:

Do you want a just a list of the management actions that would respond to the COT Issue/Conservation Measures, a summary of the management prescriptions like Buffalo did, or do you want something more detailed (like the entire text of the management action)?

For instance:

Retain sage-grouse habitats within PACs (pertains to PAC designation; actions below this line are evaluated independent of PAC designation for each Alternative)

So far we have 5 management actions that are either directly related to sage-grouse habitat or are "residual" management actions that benefit sage-grouse habitat.

Hopefully that makes sense.

--

Holly Elliott
P&EC, WFO
307-347-5193
307-388-5102

--

Alex L. S. Schubert
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Cheyenne Field Office

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
307-772-2374 ext. 238
><(((('>

REVIEW OF STATE SAGE-GROUSE CONSERVATION PLANNING EFFORTS

State:

GSG Population:

Management Zone:

Issue	Conservation Objective from COT Report	Conservation Measures from COT Report ¹	State Self-Assessment Ranking (U, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)	Preliminary Assessment of Consistency with COT Report	
				Actions in Conservation Plans that address the COT Objective and Description of how those actions support the ranking	Other Actions that may address this COT objective
Sagebrush Removal / Elimination	Avoid sagebrush removal or manipulation in greater sage-grouse breeding or wintering habitats				
Agricultural Conversion	Avoid further loss of sagebrush habitat for agricultural activities (both animal and plant production) and prioritize restoration. In areas where taking agricultural lands out of production has benefited GSG, the programs supporting these actions should be targeted and continued (e.g., CRP/SAFE). Threat amelioration activities should, at a minimum, be prioritized within PACS, but should be considered in all greater sage-grouse habitats.				
Fire	Retain and restore healthy native sagebrush communities within greater sage-grouse range (both within and outside PACs)	Restrict or contain fire within mormal range of rie activity, including size,and frequency			
		Eliminate intentional fires in sagebrush habitats, including prescribed burning or breeding and winter habitats			
		Design and implement resotation of burned sagebursh habitats to allow for natural succession to healthy native sagebrush plant ccommunities			
		Implement monitoring programs for restoration activities			
		Immediately supress fire in all sagebrush habitats			

Pinyon-juniper Expansion / Conifers	Remove pinyon-juniper from areas of sagebrush that are most likely to support greater sage-grouse (post-removal) at a rate at least equal to the rate of p-j incursion				
Non-native, Invasive Plant Species - Weeds/Annual Grasses	Maintain and restore healthy, native sagebrush communities (both within and outside PACs)	Retain all remaining large intact sagebrush patches, particularly at low elevations			
		Reduce or eliminate disturbances that promote the spread of invasive species			
		Monitor and control invasive vegetation post-wildfire for at least three years			
		Require best management practices for construction projects in and adjacent to sagebrush habitats to prevent invasion			
		Restore altered ecosystems such that non-native invasive plants are reduced to levels that do not put the area at risk of conversion if a catastrophic event were to			
Energy Development	Energy development should be designed to insure that it will not impinge upon stable or increasing greater sage-grouse population trends	Avoid energy development in PACs			
		If avoidance is not possible within PACs development should only occur in non-habitat areas (including appurtenant structures), with an adequate buffer that is sufficient to preclude impacts to sage-grouse habitats from noise and other human activities.			
		If development must occur in sage-grouse habitats due to existing rights and lack of reasonable alternative avoidance measures the development should occur in the least suitable habitat for sage-grouse and be designed to ensure, at a minimum, that there are no detectable declines in sage-grouse population trends.			

Mining	Maintain stable to increasing greater sage-grouse populations and no net loss of greater sage-grouse habitats in areas affected by mining				
Infrastructure	Avoid development of infrastructure within PACs	No new development of infrastructure corridors within PACs. Designated, but not yet developed infrastructure corridors should be re-located outside of PACs unless it can be demonstrated that these corridors will have no impacts on the maintenance of neutral or positive sage-grouse poulation trends and habitats.			
		New infrastructure should be avoided where individaul state plans have identified key connectivcity corridors outside of PACs.			
Grazing	Conduct grazing management for all ungulates in a manner consistent with local ecological conditions that maintains of restores healthy sagebrush shrub and native perennial grass and forb communities and conserves the essential habitat components for greater sage-grouse (shrub and nesting cover). Areas which do not currently meet this standard should be managed to restore these components. Adequate monitoring of grazing strategies and their results, with necessary changes in strategies, is essential to ensuring that desired ecological conditions and greater sage-grouse response are achieved. (PFC; for riparian areas) or Rangeland Health Standards (RHS; uplands).				
Free-Roaming Equid Management	Protect sage-grouse from the negative influences of grazing by free roaming equids.	Develop, implement, and enforce adequate regulatory mechanisms to protect sage-grouse habitat from negative influences of grazing by free-roaming equids.			

		Manage free-roaming equids at levels that allow native sagebrush vegettative comminities to minimally achieve Proper Functioning Condition (riparian areas) or Rangeland Health Standards (upland areas). Similar measures should be implemented on non-federal land surfaces.			
Recreation	In areas subjected to recreational activities, maintain healthy native sagebrush communities based on local ecological conditions and with consideration of drought conditions, and manage direct and indirect human disturbance (including noise) to avoid interruption of normal greater sage-grouse behavior. Consider application in all sagebrush habitats (within and outside PACs).				
Ex-Urban Development / Urbanization	Limit urban and exurban development in greater sage-grouse habitats and maintain intact native sagebrush communities				

The following categories were not identified in Table 2 of the COT report, but were identified in the text of the report itself. Please provide any information, including rankings, which address these categories.

Range Management Structures	Avoid or reduce the impact of range management structures on greater sage-grouse				
PACs	Retain sage-grouse habitats within PACs <i>(pertains to PAC designation)</i>	If PACs are lost to catastrophic events, implement appropriate restoration efforts			
		Restore and rehabilitate degraded sage-grouse habitat within PACS.			
		Identify areas and habitats outside of PACs which may be necessary to maintain viability of sage-grouse. If development or vegetation manipulation activities outside of PACs are proposed, the project proponent should work with federal, state or local agencies and interested stakeholders to ensure consistency with sage-grouse habitat needs			

		Re-evaluate the status of PACs and adjacent sage-grouse habitat at least once every 5-years, or when important new information becomes available.			
		Actively pursue opportunities to increase occupancy and connectivity between PACs.			
		Maintain or improve existing habitat conditions in areas adjacent to burned habitat.			

¹ Not all Conservation Objectives in the COT report identified Conservation Measures

Proposed Self- Assessment Rankings for State Sage-grouse Conservation Efforts:

U: Unknown if threat is present (e.g. due to extremely localized nature of the threat), no color assigned

0: Threat not present, no color assigned

1: No protections (voluntary or regulatory) to address the threat (red)

2: Conservation actions to address are not at a sufficient scale, distribution, or intensity to remove or reduce the threat. Examples include restrictions apply to only part of the sage-grouse distribution due to land ownership (scale, distribution), or the restriction provides minimal protection (e.g. 0.25 vs. 0.6 mile buffer). (red)

3. Actions may be sufficient to address the threat, but have not yet shown results or may not been fully implemented yet. (yellow)

4. Actions may be sufficient to address the threat and have been implemented, but threat has been exacerbated by actions outside the control of the State (e.g. sufficient mechanisms to reduce impacts from energy development, but habitat lost due to catastrophic wildfire). (yellow)

5. Actions sufficient to address threat, and are fully implemented at the appropriate scale, distribution, and intensity to reduce the threat to sustain stable long-term population trends, and remove the threat over the long-term. (green)

6. Actions sufficient to address threat and are fully implemented at the appropriate scale, distribution, and intensity to reduce the threat to sustain stable long-term population trends, or remove the threat, and are implemented long-term through a regulatory mechanism. (green)